

AIDS
Network of
Edmonton
Society

The
AIDS
Network

V.I.P. NEWS



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HELPLINE



488-5816

V.I.P. News

*A bi-monthly newsletter for the
supporters of the
AIDS Network of Edmonton Society.*

AIDS Network of Edmonton Society

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A Black and White Affair... Dancing the Night Away

If you missed the Black and White Affair this year, then you missed one of the best events that Edmonton's seen in quite some time!

Commerce Place was the site and sight of one of Edmonton's most popular parties on March 8.

600 people attended an evening of food, silent auction,... and, of course, dancing. The dance floor was jam packed with people dancing to the 60ish/70ish sounds of the Kit Kat Club and the Latin pop/funk rhythms of Maracujah until 1:30 in the morning.

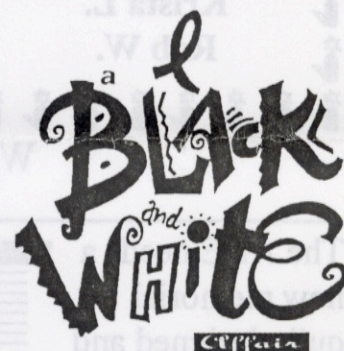
Food from 14 different Edmonton restaurants was served with creativity and class. Lola's Restaurant and Martini Bar, Normand's Restaurant, Senor Frogs, Zenari's, Highlevel Diner and The King & I were a few of the restaurants on site. Eric Wah of the King & I kept serving, and serving, and serving...

Martinis were also one of the highlights of the evening with Lola's and Select Restaurant & Bar serving up creation after creation. There is something to be said about having a martini in one's hand...

The silent auction at some points during the evening became a frenzy as people tried to get in their last bids for items before bidding closed. Notable items included signed, limited edition prints from the ever popular Joe Average (last year's International AIDS Conference poster designer); a rollerblade party courtesy of Skier's Sportshop Ltd.; a martini party for ten courtesy of Lola's; Jean Paul Gaultier sunglasses from Occhiali Eyewear; a wilderness getaway at Labyrinth Lake Lodge; and a rock climbing session for eight from A Campus Outdoor Centre. Up for bid were over 70 pieces of art, recreation and fitness packages, and lots of specialized items for personal use, making this silent auction unique in the city.

The event was a good mixture of people. Many community members came out to support the AIDS Network, but at the same time, they came out for the fun. Alongside the 'sophistication' of the martinis, and a touch of positive eccentricity in the atmosphere (and some of the guests!), existed a genuine, 'down home' kind of fun. Smiles were not in shortage, as people mixed, mingled, and danced with new and old friends. What an indescribable mix of people!


(Continued on page 3)





VOLUNTEER CORNER


Thanks to *ALL* the terrific volunteers who helped make the Black and White Affair a night to remember.

Special thanks to these volunteers who really gave their all:



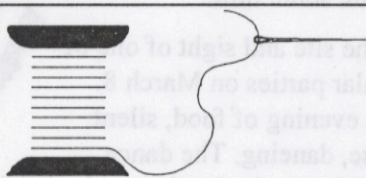
 Krista L. Sean E. Alex M. Kelly P.

 Rob W. Laura C. Jim R. Dan D.



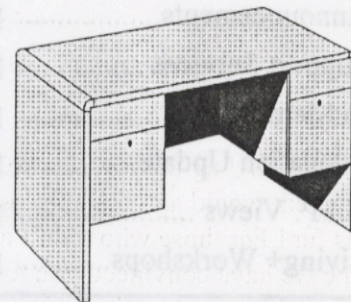
We couldn't do it without volunteers like you!

The ANE needs a new memorial quilt designed and made to hang in the office. Do you have a design in mind or can you sew? Please call. June @ 488-5742



Have a seat at our front desk...

**Reception
Volunteers
Needed**



If you are available 9-1 or 1-5, please call June @ 488-5742.

Helps you to improve or keep up skills if you are looking for work. It's also a great way to meet the staff and other volunteers.



**MAKE THE
DIFFERENCE!**

CELEBRATE!
National Volunteer
Week
April 13 - 19, 1997

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Black and White Affair

(Continued from page 1)

Thanks to our two event co-sponsors, Syncrude Canada Ltd. and Northwestern Utilities Limited, for helping to make this event possible. Their financial support of this event was important, but their spirit and enthusiasm in the fight against AIDS is much more valuable.

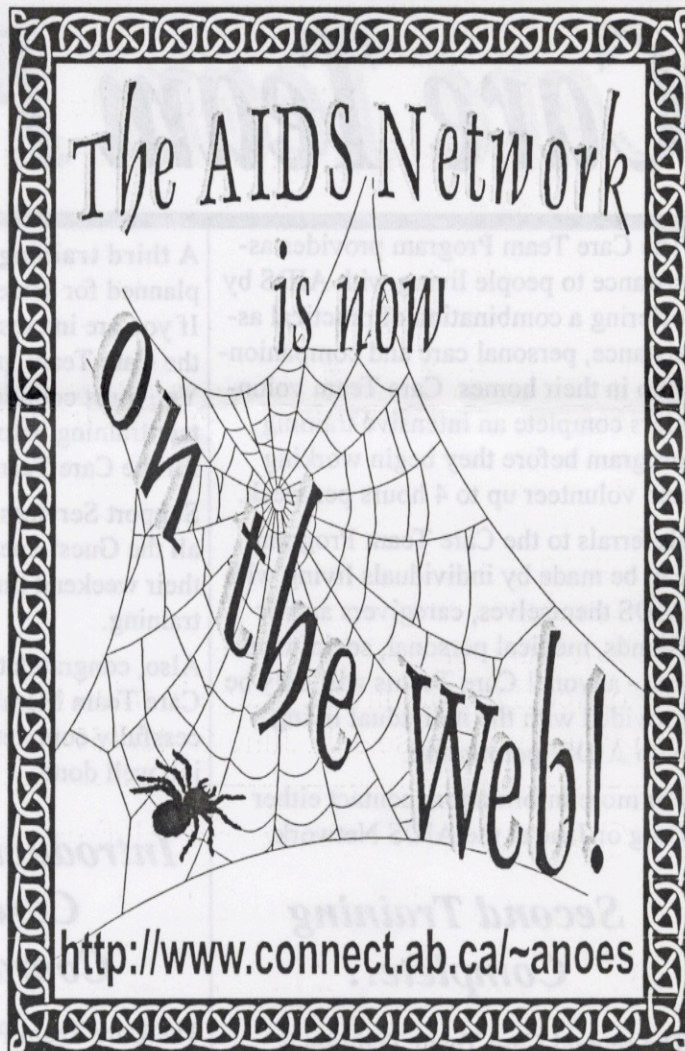
Most especially, many accolades and thanks go to our tireless crew of volunteers who worked especially hard to make this event a success. From the bussers, to the hosts, and the set-up and tear down crews, volunteers were an integral part of this event. If you felt that the evening was a fabulous event, then thank the volunteers. What you saw that night was a result of their hard work!

So after reading this article, we hope that those who attended the event would agree with us - it was one of the best, and it was fun! For those who didn't attend the event this year, we hope we have convinced you to be there next year! You don't know what you are missing!

Pam Seto

ANE Special Events Coordinator

At press time, the amount of dollars raised was unavailable. This total will be published in the next newsletter.



AIDS Network of Edmonton Community Leadership Award

This award, which is to be presented at the AIDS Network Annual General Meeting, acknowledges the contributions of one individual **whose efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS have shown significant community leadership.** Past recipients include Dr. Stan Houston and Monsignor William Irwin.

The board would like to receive nominations for this year's award by May 1, 1997. Your letter of nomination should be addressed to Susan Jamieson c/o #201, 11456 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 0M1. The award will be presented at the **Annual General Meeting on June 18, 1997, at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton 12530 - 110 Avenue at 7:30 PM.**

SUPPORT SERVICES

Care Team Program News

The Care Team Program provides assistance to people living with AIDS by offering a combination of practical assistance, personal care and companionship in their homes. Care Team volunteers complete an intensive training program before they begin working and volunteer up to 4 hours per week.

Referrals to the Care Team Program can be made by individuals living with AIDS themselves, caregivers and/or friends, medical personal, social workers, - anyone! Care Teams will only be provided with the individual living with AIDS' permission.

For more information, contact either Greg or Jane at the AIDS Network.

Second Training Complete!!

The second Care Team Training is complete. We trained approximately 10 new volunteers for the program. We now have two Care Teams operating and are working with an increasing case load.

A third training is presently being planned for sometime before summer. If you are interested in working with the Care Team, please contact June. You must complete the general volunteer training before you can register for the Care Team Training workshop.

Support Services would like to thank all the Guest Speakers who donated their weekend time to present at the training.

Also, congratulations to all the new Care Team Members who have successfully completed the program. A job well done.

Introducing the New Care Team Coordinator...

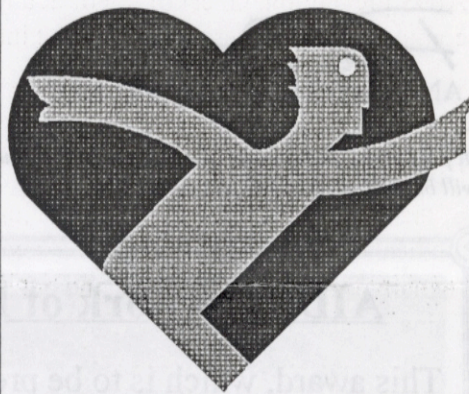
The Care Team Program is operated solely by volunteers. The Care Team Coordinator role is no different. What is different however is that this job can take up to 20 hours a week!! Finding a volunteer who had the skills, knowledge and time seemed impossible.

Support Services is pleased to announce that **Jane Bigelow** has stepped forward and has been accepted into the role of Care Team Coordinator.

Jane was trained in the original Care Team Training and since then enjoyed the contact and relationships with the clients she has worked with. While greatly missing that contact, she has assumed the more leadership role of running the Care Team Program.

Thank you very much Jane, for all the work to this point and in the future.

Jane is assisted by Care Team Leader Gerry Hagans.



*In Memorium
We Remember:*

Don N.

Cameron C.

Forever in our hearts



EDUCATION UPDATE

NEW VIDEOS IN THE RESOURCE ROOM

Puppets Against AIDS: Township to Tundra

This film charts the first North American tour of a puppet troupe of South Africans whose mission is to go global with safer sex. Organized by Oxfam, it is a cross-cultural odyssey, with stops in smaller, sometimes remote communities where AIDS is spreading quickly and education is urgently needed. Their exchange with Canadians is warm, funny, and full of raw township energy.

All About Eve

This video profiles Eve Van Grafhorst, a young 10 year old girl from Australia who contracted HIV from a blood transfusion at birth. Through home movies, we see her progress. We meet Eve's family and learn how much they mean to her, especially the untiring devotion of her mother. We see Eve at schools as she talks about living with AIDS and AIDS prevention. Guest of honor at a Maori community, her message has a great impact.

Teen Sex: Challenge and Decision

In this dynamic video, Dr. Stephen Genuisk, author of the best seller *Risky Sex*, presents important medical information on adolescent sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, and decision making. Using language and images which teenagers and young adults can relate to, a variety of myths and different lifestyle options are explored.

GMOC UPDATE

Just a brief note to fill you in on what's going on with the Gay Men's Outreach Crew (GMOC). Both the "Coming Out in the 90's" and "Being Gay in the 90's" workshops are up and running with a lot of stimulating discussion taking place. My thanks go out to the participants for taking part in the workshops and especially to Fred, Garrett, Brian, and Brian who are doing a tremendous job of co-facilitating the groups. There is another workshop starting on April 16 called "Men Meeting Men in the 90's - Sex, Dating, and Intimacy". It takes place over four consecutive Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 PM. This workshop explores different aspects of relationships, being comfortable with love, being gay and strengthening bonds with each other. Participants are urged to speak openly and honestly about how they understand their own needs for companionship, sex, friendship and romance. To register, call Kirk at 488-5742 or leave a message on the GMOC hotline at 988-3671.

GMOC is always looking for volunteers to help out with our various activities such as outreach at different gay and gay positive venues, fundraising, and workshop facilitation. To find out how you can get involved, give Kirk a call or drop by the Network offices for a chat.

PRIDE WEEK is going to be held this year from **June 21 to June 28**, and the Pride Week Committee could always use some extra volunteers to help with the planning. I'm hoping that GMOC will have a large presence in this week-long celebration of being gay so give me a call if you are interested in helping out.

Changes in Education - Kathy Burns

As of April 1, 1997 I will be leaving my position as Coordinator of Education, but will instead be directly involved in program funding support and evaluation. Assuming the role of Administration Director, I will be looking at education with great interest as programs undergo a shift in priorities.

The Smart Sex Campaign funded by Health Canada from the fall of 1995 to present is currently coming to an end with a report to be submitted to Health Canada. As a result of this campaign, a Youth Health Advisory Council developed and will be involved in different health issues of concern to youth/young adults. The council is seeking independent funding to continue their initiatives in Edmonton and area. Other programs including GMOC, ethnocultural, women's initiatives and others will continue. The Resource Centre will be upgrading services and enhancing information availability including access to the Internet!

I would like to thank all of the volunteers and community groups for their support over the past 2 1/2 years, and I look forward to seeing you at the ANE in my capacity as Administration Director. Greg Ikert will be the new Education/Outreach Coordinator. He can be reached by calling the Network @ 488-5742.

VIP VIEWS

An Uncertain Death

I was planning on being dead by now, and I'm not sure how I feel about the alternative. Often it seems too late. I have been condemned to death, and now I find out that my doctors may have been just kidding.

Protease inhibitors (PI's) are a new generation of anti-HIV drugs. There is evidence that these drugs will allow HIV-positive people to live longer. Longer than they anticipated, longer than they were told. In combination with other earlier released anti-HIV drugs they may even be able to eliminate enough of the HIV infection to allow your body to repair itself. New areas of scientific experimentation are working on immune system boosters that could assist in the repair of a damaged immune system. Contrary to the expectations of their doctors and their friends, not all people with AIDS or HIV are elated. It is never too late.

I am still not sure what "too late" may mean. The new combinations were too late because many friends are dead. What good are these new drugs for those who are no longer with us? But also it is "too late" because, in a way, my life is already dead. There are far too many individuals who are feeling like this in the wake of New Hope. New Hope for what? I knew I was HIV positive in 1989. Denial, for many years, coupled with hope kept me sane and a viable contributor to society. My body slowly began to deteriorate. I stopped going to funerals of anyone under 50 years old.

In the past, HIV-negative people had the effrontery to complain to me about their "survivor's guilt." I now know what they were feeling. All my friends were good and kind, and doing good in the world, and were dying and I'm still here. It's not that I or others who are still alive for the great combinations actually want to die, but that it has become indubitably necessary for us to prepare to die. It has been absolutely necessary that many of us prepare our friends and family to accept our demise. I was there two years ago and settled in to "go into the light".

Denial, for many years, coupled with hope kept me sane and a viable contributor to society. I have survived to come back from a weak and frail 110 lbs., following my doctor's suggestions; "it is time to get your life in order". I allowed my friends and family to make closure with me and I too made closure with many, especially myself. I took stock of my life and knew where I lived well and that I was a good person. I have no monuments commemorating my great achievements in life, but I did make a difference to many lives along the way. I did okay in this life.

Some, upon hearing that I was making a comeback, cried out; "You're cured!" Solemnly I reminded them that the new hope is not yet a cure. But we, the people who are actually still living with AIDS, have to fight media hype, reminding those who think we are immortal survivors and are so much in love with our strength and courage, that we are still sick; reminding ourselves as well. Denial with the AIDS related death rate of the past and the infection rate from the 80's interferes with our ability to make current decisions and prevents us from being fully available for our friends - who are still dying, but just more slowly.

I have made a final will. My instructions about resuscitation have been shared with those who might have to make decisions for me and with my doctors. I keep diaries ready to burn or erase. My urn is dusted from time to time. My memorial music is set. I have few peers now that I have not been working for over two years. I have not had a social life, invited people over or been invited over to someone's home for over two years. Those family special occasions no longer include my partner (HIV negative) and I - "Bob is probably too sick or maybe he will catch a cold or the flu from us healthy ones". Care givers, friends and family have exhausted themselves and for what? I am still alive. I am not dead. I am looking better. I am getting better. But I must still accept that I will die soon. Should I plan my future, again, still, or not at all? Should I spend what little money I have or should I save it for the future?

Christmas has been my last one for three consecutive years now. How do you plan for special occasions when you are suppose to be dead or well on your way to being dead? How do you make each occasion special when you are sick or sickening to look at? I used to laugh at living too cautiously, at the people who ate right, drank right and were preventative of getting cancer in their future, and of the people who were putting all their money into mutual funds or RRSP savings. The latter I don't find funny at all any more; I don't have any more savings because I thought I would not need them. When I thought I was going to die in six months, I spent any future on "getting my affairs in order".

(Continued on page 7)

VIP Views (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

So the AIDS epidemic is over. I am so happy you are well and enjoying your new life. You can get on with your life. Get on with my what? Do what with my life? It seems strange to me that my normally sensitive friends and family should presume that I would rather get on with my life then get on with dying. I did as much preparing for my death as I had done living up to that point. It was exhausting.

Now I am living with true survivor's guilt - but there is still much more to this feeling. I think that I don't deserve to be alive. I want to know how friends who were so good are dead, and I who am equally so good or not so bad, am still alive and maybe will not die soon. What should I do now? I'm getting survivor's guilt when I should be dead.

So I add and juggle protease inhibitors with other medications and treatments. I will continue making decisions as I have always done- capriciously. I am confused about not being dead, but I'm very sure I want to put off getting sick. I have been there and really don't want to return. So I go ahead. I think I know who I am.

I, just two years ago, was condemned to death, and now I find out that I just may continue to be alive. I still have to eat and survive now and in the future. I will be retiring in less than 20 years. I would love to go back to work so I can complain again about the stress and about not being appreciated for what I do each day.

Some days this is just how I feel. I must now learn to just put one foot in front of the other, plan my medication schedule, cook dinner, clean up behind myself and mostly find some use to my life as it is. I chat with my internet buddies about drug side effects and hope. I have the trappings of a life. It's not so bad. I still have my partner after 20 years, he still has a more certain future even though we do not. And I write.

By: Bob Mills

Friends and Family Support Group

Support Services is pleased to announce that Don Freeman will be facilitating the Friends and Family Support Group.

Sessions start April 17, 1997 at 7:00pm.

Please call Greg or Sandra for more information and/or to register.

Groups will be run on a 6 week cycle.
Phone: 488-5742
for more info.



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PHONE: 488-1553

JAZZBERRYS TOO! IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR CATERING AND
SPECIAL EVENTS

LIVING POSITIVE WORKSHOPS

LIFE SKILLS

LIFE STYLES

LIFE CHOICES

Living Positive, is planning a series of workshops focusing on life skills, life styles and life choices. The workshops will be of interest to peer counselors and individuals living with HIV that are interested in continuing to develop existing skills and support techniques. Workshop topics that are being considered are:

1. Addictions,
2. Multiple Losses,
3. Aboriginal Healing,
4. Positive Sexuality,
5. Suicide Prevention.

Our community is diverse and our membership has indicated a need to know more about issues that people living with HIV are coping with. The goal of each of the workshops is to provide an opportunity to continue to develop skills and knowledge by:

1. identifying resources,
2. exploring options and choices,
3. connecting with peers.

We believe that tangible social support, sharing mutual experience, information and insight, promoting AIDS awareness, basic human rights and a positive, dignified, hopeful attitude are fundamental to promoting and developing a life style that is healthy for each person.

Please contact Kirk or Maggie at Living Positive to get involved, to register or for more information.

The workshops will be offered free to HIV+ participants and will take place during May and June.

Please return the following information by **April 11** to help us plan the workshops:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Numbers (home) _____

(other) _____

Please indicate the workshops you are interested in attending by order of preference.

1. Addictions, ()
2. Multiple Losses, ()
3. Aboriginal Healing, ()
4. Positive Sexuality, ()
5. Suicide Prevention. ()

You are welcome to participate in as many workshops as you wish.

Topics that you want to see covered : _____

How to connect with us:

Drop this off or mail it to... Living Positive - #201, 11456 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton T5K 0M1

or e-mail us at livepos@connect.ab.ca

Give us a Call at 488-5768 or Fax us at 488-3735